

more serious than similar crimes that are not motivated by bias.

Based on the results of this report, I hereby direct the Department of Justice to work with State and local law enforcement agencies, as well as relevant law enforcement organizations, to come up with a plan to improve hate crimes reporting, within 120 days. I understand that the Department already plans to meet with representatives of State and local law enforcement organizations later this month. In addition to this meeting, the Department should consider in its plan whether various actions, such as the following, would improve hate crimes reporting:

- Pilot programs in jurisdictions where law enforcement agencies reported zero incidents of hate crimes;
- A study to analyze the role that juvenile offenders play in the number of hate crimes committed each year;
- Training sessions by Federal law enforcement on identifying and reporting hate crimes; and
- Activities by the U.S. Attorney Hate Crimes Working Groups to work with community groups and local law enforcement to improve hate crimes reporting in their areas, including helping to bring more victims forward to the police.

In carrying out these activities, I know that you will continue your leadership on fighting and preventing hate crimes in order to make this country a safer place for all Americans.

**William J. Clinton**

### **Interview With John Harris of the Washington Post**

*August 8, 2000*

#### ***Perspectives on the Final Year***

**Mr. Harris.** Have these guys told you what I'm up to? I'll give you the quick version.

**The President.** Yes, give me the quick version.

**Mr. Harris.** It's a piece about year 8 of the Presidency. It's not a legacy piece, looking back at the 8 years. It's a piece about this year and sort of what you're doing on

the policy front, on the political front, on the personal front.

The historic pattern in, you know, basically since World War II has not been last years of Presidencies. Most people have sort of slunk to the finish line, if they made it at all. And it seems to me that you are defying that pattern, and the China vote showed that you have continued policy relevance. I think there's a lot of interest in what you're doing politically for Democrats, particularly for the First Lady.

And I think there's a lot of interest in how you're doing personally, after—you know, by any definition the ordeal of '98, '99, sort of how do you come back and have, by any sort of objective measure, this very energetic final year?

So those three dimensions are all things that I'm interested in.

One thing I'm curious about is to what extent—how self-conscious you were at the end of last year, at the start of this year, that, look, we've got a very limited window, and was there sort of a methodical approach to organizing the limited amount of time you had left, or was it just sort of, you know, a race to the finish line? In other words, was there an acute sense of the window closing?

**The President.** Well, let me back up a minute and say I have—I was aware, I suppose, at some level, from the moment I got here, although I didn't have much time to think about it, that generally, Presidencies seem to wind down. And normally, it starts sometime not just in the last year but in the year before that. And occasionally, something pops up that happens that's good, but normally there is kind of a decline.

I didn't think that that was necessary but that it was something you had to have a definite strategy to avoid, because it's just not right for the country. You know, they pay us to show up for 4 years, and there's always a lot of business to be done.

And even in the political context of an election and even, clearly, the change of administration—as I always remind all my colleagues in the Congress, on both sides—no matter how much we get done, there will still be plenty of things that won't be resolved, over which there will be genuine differences, and therefore, you can have a

meaningful election. So we all had a job to do. So if you just want to focus on the last year, let's start with that.

I essentially organized this year the way I have every year from the beginning. And that is, you begin by laying out a strategy consistent with the vision we started with, based on what has been achieved already, what hasn't been achieved, and what has come up. And you articulate that in the State of the Union Address with as much clarity as possible.

Now, this year what I did was to try both to articulate what I would try to do this year and to look—in terms of not just what had been achieved over the last 7 years but in terms of the remaining long-term challenges for the country. I laid it out with great specificity. And the good thing about that is, it serves as a real organizing principle for the White House staff and for the Cabinet, for how I spend my time, both in the office with the Congress and in the country.

And it really has worked. I think one of the things that has gotten—that has led to some Presidents and some White Houses to get less than they might have out of all their days is the tendency to become overcome with the politics of the political environment or the conventional wisdom. A lot of being President is a job, like any other job. And you have control over your attitude toward it, your priorities, and what you work on. And if everybody is working on the same page and full steam ahead, a lot of things happen.

So you start with a strategy and with as many specifics as possible in the State of the Union, and then you just try to execute it. And we've had some success, as you pointed out.

#### ***Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China***

**Mr. Harris.** Did you ever feel that the China vote was lost? I was talking to somebody, one of your advisers, who said they had come back from a meeting with one of the organized labor leaders who told him, "Look, we've got the votes. We're jamming you on this. Sorry about it."

**The President.** I knew that they thought they had us beat. But I didn't think so because I thought that in the end, the vote was

so clearly in the national interests, and the consequences of defeat—where somebody says, "Well, let's just put it off," or, "Maybe we'll come back to it next year," or something like that—were so clearly adverse to what was good for America's future that I thought in the end they'd come around and do the right thing.

#### ***Accomplishments in the Early Years***

**Mr. Harris.** How much easier do you think this job is in year 8 than in year 1? I mean, is there a sense of, like, look, there's no kind of curveball that's going to get thrown at me that's going to be one I haven't seen before?

**The President.** Well, at one level, it's much easier because I had never worked in the Washington environment before, and as you remember, the strategy of the opposition was that I would have no honeymoon—[laughter]—and I didn't. And I also had a country with a lot of big problems when I started, and we had to get a lot of big things done. And I tried to—maybe even too much—I tried to put a lot of things through the system in the first 2 years.

We got three of the four big things I wanted to do done. We got the economic plan that—eventually we got welfare reform, but I could tell we were going to get it. And we got started with executive actions, and we passed the crime bill. But we couldn't do health care. And then there was all this, you know, a lot of—and we were also, at the time, putting together a team in the White House, in the Cabinet, working together, and working with all the others, which the White House and the whole administration—with whom the White House and the whole administration had to work. So to try to get stuff done and put the thing together, it was very difficult.

Since then, every year I think it has gotten a little easier from that point of view. On the other hand, there are always—it never ceases to be challenging or interesting. And if you're trying to do meaningful things, there are always going to be things that are very, very hard to do. For example, one of the toughest things we're working on now is the Middle East.

But that's another thing. I think it's a mistake, just because you're near the end, rather than the beginning of an administration, not to try to do the big things, especially if they really need doing within the time frame that you have.

### **1994 Election/Whitewater**

**Mr. Harris.** One of the early themes when I showed up on this beat, which I guess was '95, '96 period, was a sense among a lot of your advisers, and I think it reflected your view, that you were not getting credit for what had been done the first couple of years, either from the press or from the public, more broadly.

Do you think you'll get credit for your Presidency, at this point? Do you feel adequately appreciated?

**The President.** Yes. I don't worry about it as much anymore. The only reason I worried about it in those years was that I felt that Congress —

**Mr. Harris.** — those people reported back you were feeling really angry about this.

**The President.** Well, you know, I don't think it's possible for me to convey how terrible I felt for other people that we lost the Congress in the '94 election. And all those people that put their necks on the line and were defeated, primarily because they voted for the economic plan, and the voters hadn't felt the positive impact of it yet, and they voted for the crime bill. And they had all these fear arguments out there on what we did on assault weapons and the Brady bill—and that was really in the election cycle, and that passed—and there was no attempt to see that the 100,000 police and the gun safety measures would work. But the fear was out there—and then, of course, when we were unsuccessful in getting even a compromise initiative on health care that deflated our side's vote a little bit. And those three things together caused a lot of very good people to lose their seats, and I felt badly about that.

I never felt that—as so many people did at the time—that it meant that the administration couldn't get reelected, because I always believed that the country had serious problems, and we had to tackle them early and brave the controversy early and that if I turned out to be right about our economic

strategy and we continue to make progress and we passed our education program, the beginning of it, in '93 and '94, that it would work out fine. And it did.

But I was frustrated more by what I thought was the preoccupation with other things, which seemed to me anybody who looked at the evidence would see didn't amount to anything. And now we know, after all this time, that Whitewater thing was a total sham. It was a sham from the beginning. It was a put-up deal, and everybody knows it now. But it seemed to me everybody should have known it years before they did.

So I was frustrated by it, just because I felt that the most important thing was to keep moving the country forward. In terms of personal credit, I think that—you know, Presidencies go through several incarnations, many of which occur after they're long gone. I have had the opportunity just in my service as President to read about administrations, through a lot of American history reading, including about administrations that most Americans don't know much about. And I see all the time there is this sort of constant process of reassessment about every period in our history. So I'll have to leave that to history. People will be reassessing this period after I'm not even alive anymore.

The only thing I ever wanted enough credit to do was to keep elected, to stay in office and to keep pushing the country in the direction I thought was important, and to get enough support in the Congress to do the things we had to do.

### **Reforming the Republican Image/Team Flexibility**

**Mr. Harris.** When you see Republicans borrowing at least some of the image of your political model, if not necessarily the content, do you take that as a compliment in any way?

**The President.** Absolutely.

**Mr. Harris.** Or does it tick you off, or do you feel like, "How dare they steal my play book?" What is your reaction to that?

**The President.** No, I'm complimented by it, because I think it shows that what we did was right, you know, to change the whole nature of our political rhetoric in the Democratic Party, and that it resonates with the American people. This country has always

worked best when there was a dynamic majority for change. And it always operates out of the center, but it's not the center, a split-the-difference center. It's a center that reflects the commonsense judgment of the American people that the time has come to change, and we ought to change in this direction. So I take that as a great compliment.

It's an important beginning for them to say, "Okay, we know we can't be and we shouldn't be mean, extremist, and sanctimonious in our political rhetoric anymore." I think that's a positive thing for them.

Now, I think there is a big difference, however, which is that when I ran in 1992, I didn't just say we're going to change our party so we can say to change the country. I said, "Here's my economic program. Here's my crime program. Here's my welfare reform program. Here's my environmental program. Here's my education program. Here's the way I'm going to do Government. Here's the way we're going to change the way Government works." And we had—you know, people used to make fun of me and Paul Tsongas, in New Hampshire, because we put out these long, detailed booklets about what we'd do, and then all of a sudden, there were more people showing up for our town meetings than anybody else.

Maybe it's because I'd been a Governor for a dozen years and because I'd been through a lot of these—the policy debates, as well as the political debates. But I think one of the most important reasons that we've had some success in our Presidency was that we actually laid out in 1992 a vision and a strategy for achieving it.

There is a lot of difference between changing the rhetoric and the political positioning of a party and changing the substance of the issues. And one of the things that I thought was interesting, just reading the aftermath of the Republican Convention and what a lot of the swing voters are saying, is that I liked what I saw. They seemed like very nice people, and I'm glad they're being more inclusive, but what are they going to do if they get the job?

And I think the reason there may have been some tactic there—they said, "Well, we're ahead. We don't have to say that"—some of it was, "We haven't really changed

our policies, so we can't say what our policies are. But I think that it's really important."

One of the things I think is great about Al Gore's selection of Joe Lieberman is, it sort of ratifies this kind of New Democratic direction we've taken, where we say we'll continue to have policies that are pro-business and pro-labor, that are pro-growth and pro-environment, that are for individual responsibility and a broader, inclusive American community.

I don't want to beat this to death, but I think this is very important. There is a scholar named Thomas Patterson, who used to be at the Maxwell School at Syracuse, used to do a lot of work on the media and the Presidency, who said that in 1995 —

**Mr. Harris.** He's a Ben Bradley professor at Harvard, by the way.

**The President.** Is he there? Well, he put out a—I had never met him at the time. I have since actually met him once or twice now, but I did not know him at the time. In 1995, when our fortunes were not exactly high, he was quoted in a newspaper article saying that my administration had already kept a higher percentage of its promises to the American people than the previous five Presidencies, even though we made more commitments, more specific commitments.

All I can say is, I think that's very important. These State of the Unions have been very important. State of the Unions for us have been the equivalent of that first booklet I put out in New Hampshire. They're a guidepost, and we do the best we can on it. But you also have to take other initiatives that come up that are consistent with it.

You know, all the things we did with Executive orders, setting aside the national monuments or including making sure seniors could be in clinical trials because Medicare would cover it, all those things that they—those are things that may come up, where we've got an idea factory here, where the staff is encouraged to come up with ideas, the Cabinet is encouraged to come up with ideas. It's all consistent with that. And even then when we're reacting—you know, sometimes things just happen, and you have to react to it. You can't be so rigid in your organization that you can't change. That's the sort of whole essence of the new economy.

### ***Hillary Clinton's Senate Campaign***

**Mr. Harris.** Can I ask you about the First Lady's campaign? There is this sort of universal consensus that, you know, you're aware of great details, or the ins and outs of that campaign, even though you're not running it or trying not to run it. But I'm not really sure I know what you do, do. Like, what is the sort of the nature of your involvement or at least awareness of the campaign? How often are the two of you talking? What kind of input can you give? She spent a quarter century being a, sort of, contributor to your political career. Now the shoe is on the other foot. What do you do?

**The President.** Well, first of all, I bend over backwards not to get too involved in it. Sometimes a week or 10 days will go by, and I won't talk to the people that are running the campaign. But obviously, I talk to her every day, usually more than once a day. And I ask her how it's going, what she did. We discuss it, talk about her day, talk about how it's unfolding. I give her my best thoughts.

And then if they ask me to come to a meeting and sit and listen, I do it. But it's no—there is no organized part to it, except that we talk every day, and we talk about it.

**Mr. Harris.** Were you an important voice in having her hire Mark Penn, not just as the pollster, but also helping run the media strategy? At one point there was an expectation, like, David Axelrod in Chicago was, you know, almost had that job. Then it ended up being Penn. And some people attributed that to you, saying you thought that was really important because he had sort of the right formula down for Democrats to get elected.

**The President.** Well, I do think that, and I have a high regard for him. But I also think Axelrod is very good. Axelrod helped me in '92 and has done things for us since then. And it seemed to me that she got the best of both worlds, because Axelrod works with the New York Democratic Party and does their party thing. So I felt that the decision she made—and it was a decision she made. She came to me and she said, "What do you think about this?" And I said, "It sounds good to me." She thought it through because she wanted to find a way to have both of them involved, and because of our relationship

with Mark over the years, she felt very close to him.

I think that there are a lot of good people, pollsters and political strategists, but it's important to have someone that you feel really comfortable with. And he basically—Mark has basically been a part of our whole kind of New Democrat movement. And I think she just felt a high comfort level with him.

**Mr. Harris.** I am curious how you—where sort of the loyal spouse ends and where the—you know, you try to help politically begins? The call you made to the Daily News was one thing. I didn't know if that was you sort of acting sort of impulsively, as a husband who was angry about that; or whether that was you saying, "Look, this is potentially a problem. I better see if I can help blunt that as a political matter." What was that about?

**The President.** Well, first of all, I did it—it may not have even been the right thing to do, because all it did was sort of give more visibility to a charge that was hokum, but I think hurt her for —

**Mr. Harris.** Most people knew —

**The President.** Most people knew it was hokum. But I think it hurt her for a few days only because it happened fortuitously—fortuitously for her adversaries—right at the opening of the Middle East peace talks, when anxiety was very high in the Jewish community. So I think that I may have been in error.

But what actually—I just wanted to make sure that since they were working the story, and I knew Mort Zuckerman and Michael Kramer quite well, and that since I had been injected into the story, that I had a very clear memory of it, and I wanted to know what did and didn't happen and what the whole background was. And so I told him.

But you know, by and large, I try to stay out of it. Congressman Lazio actually featured me in an ad or two, which I thought was —

**Mr. Harris.** He's got moxie.

**The President.** Yes, well, at least that. Senator Moynihan was really angry when he was used and said what he thought about it. But I figure the voters of New York are smart enough to figure out that I'm for her and not him. [Laughter] But I haven't been harshly partisan—so, you know, Tom DeLay could do the same thing because there is one

issue that Tom DeLay and I really agree on, and I bragged on him. He came to the White House, and I bragged on him. I think that's what we ought to do.

I think we can argue with each other in elections without demonizing each other, and I think when they do that, they're wrong. But I think the voters are smart enough to figure that out without my help.

### **Whitewater**

**Mr. Harris.** You mentioned the Whitewater thing a little earlier, which leads to a question I wanted to ask about. Remember in September '98, when you spoke to your Cabinet, and many of them afterwards spoke to us? They said that you had said you had been—you realized, had been angry for many days of your Presidency. And I remember that struck me quite a lot, because, you know, to cover you, you do not seem most of the time like an angry person or somebody filled with——

**The President.** I'm not by nature an angry person.

**Mr. Harris.** So I was sort of astonished to learn that description. And I'm wondering to what extent do you still feel that way? Or do you think that's changed?

**The President.** I work on it all the time. But I think that this whole Whitewater business will be looked upon by any rational observer in history as an absurd episode in American history which didn't amount to a hill of beans—if there had been any special council law on the books at the time it came up, it wouldn't have triggered a special council—and that the coverage of it as if it were serious required people essentially to suspend all ordinary notions of proof and common sense. That's what I really believe.

And as a consequence, scores of innocent people got hurt. A lot of people got charged with criminal offenses, simply because they refused to lie, and it did a lot of damage to our political system for no good end. And I think it will be viewed as an absurd aberration in American history. I felt very badly about it. I felt very badly about the way everybody involved was treated about it. I still do. I think it was—the whole way it was done was just wrong.

**Mr. Harris.** Terry McAuliffe and other people who are friends of yours—I was out in Arkansas last week and saw David Leopoulous and Jim Blair, everybody——

**The President.** Did you see Jim?

**Mr. Harris.** I did, yes.

**The President.** How do you think he's doing?

**Mr. Harris.** He seemed great. I don't know him well.

**The President.** Did he tell you how he did in his tennis tournament?

**Mr. Harris.** He told me he was playing that weekend.

**The President.** Oh, so you saw him right before? Yes, because I haven't talked to him since then.

**Mr. Harris.** And I was reluctant to see him. But I said, "Look, you know, it never hurts to call," and I said, "If you don't want to, it's fine." He goes, "No, come on." I went out to dinner with him and his daughter.

**The President.** Which daughter?

**Mr. Harris.** The one that lives here, in Maryland.

**The President.** That's Susie.

**Mr. Harris.** Yes, up in Columbia, Maryland.

**The President.** A computer genius. She made millions of dollars and now spends all her time—she spends all her time tutoring inner-city kids in math. It's unbelievable.

**Mr. Harris.** She's only a year or two older than me and she's ——

**The President.** All of his kids are wizards. They're all in computers somewhere or another. One of them has a Ph.D. in philosophy, but she does all the data processing for a big hospital network in Chicago. And the other one works in Texas, his son.

**Mr. Harris.** He showed me his art, Peruvian art collection.

**The President.** Great stuff.

### **President's Current Perspective**

**Mr. Harris.** It's amazing. Anyway, everybody is sort of the mind that you seem more relaxed, sort of more at peace than you have previously. I'm just wondering what—you know, to what extent that's the result of you seeing the pastoral counsel once a week; to what extent it's just—in some ways, it seems to me——

**The President.** In a funny way, I think I am. And I think part of it is, when you go through any difficult period, it either breaks you or makes you better. I just wake up every day with this enormous feeling of gratitude. I'm grateful. I'm grateful to my wife and to my daughter. I've got my family back. I'm grateful to the people who work with me, who stuck with me. And I'm enormously grateful to the American people for continuing to support what I was trying to do for them. To me, every day is a gift now.

I still get mad and frustrated and angry. And one of the things that I am doing, that I have to work on, frankly—I'll make a little confession. The only thing that I'm feeling about this last year is that I just want to keep working. I never want to sleep. My mind is working more than ever before. And when Hillary is gone, particularly, in New York, you know, I go to bed with a pile of stuff that I want to do, and I just read and read and read and read. I just want to keep going.

**Mr. Harris.** It does seem like you're in a sprint, you know, traveling here, fundraiser tonight, fly to Japan and then back, land here today, down to Charlottesville. Is that a conscious strategy? "Look, I've got 6 months to go or whatever. I'm just going to race to the finish line." Is that what it's about?

**The President.** Yes. And also, I think of it in a different way. I think, you know, I don't have a campaign to do. I don't have to live with those pressures. And if there is something out there to be done that's good for my country or that I think is the right thing to do, even if it puts a big strain on me physically, I know that I won't be under the kind of stress that I would be in if I were trying to manage a campaign and manage the Presidency; and I ought to resolve down in favor of making the effort. Because I ought to do everything I can for America as President that I can do and still function at a high level, and I can rest starting at noon on January 20th. And that's what I intend to do.

**Chief of Staff John D. Podesta.** Me, too. [Laughter]

**The President.** We're all going to a rest home together. [Laughter] You know how the President gets to take one last ride on Air Force One, and you wave to everybody, on the helicopter, and then you get on Air

Force One, and you wave to everybody? I'm thinking of loading the whole White House staff and the whole Cabinet on and going to Bermuda. [Laughter]

### **The President and the Republicans**

**Mr. Harris.** How much progress have you made in figuring out—to me, one of the big mysteries of the Clinton year, which is, you're a centrist President, not a leftwing President—I think your basic instinct is to try to get along with people—and yet, you have this intense antagonism that you excite on the right? And I've never seen that it could be entirely ideological, because you haven't fundamentally been an ideological President. Do you have a theory on it?

**The President.** I think I have not been conventionally ideological. That is, I haven't been—but I think there are two or three reasons for it. And I guess I should start with a little humility. You can't be liked by everybody. You know, my favorite story that I tell at least 10 times a year is about the guy that's walking along the edge of the Grand Canyon, and he slips. He says, "God, why me?" And He says, "Son, there's just something about you I don't like." [Laughter] So you've got to allow for that.

But I think, first of all, I have some insight into this because I was a Governor for a dozen years, so I knew all these guys. I knew the people that were engineering the campaign in '91 on. And periodically there have been stunning flashes of candor coming out of various actors on the other side.

I think, first and overwhelmingly, you have to understand that basically the Republicans believed that they had made a marriage between the establishment Republicans and the far right, the religious right, and other ultra-conservative elements like the NRA and all those folks. And they thought that that coalition, particularly when it came back and gave President Bush a resounding victory over Governor Dukakis, they basically believed that they would always beat Democrats, that they would never lose the White House until a third party came along. That's what they believed. They thought they had found a formula and that they would put us in a certain box, and we would be there, and they would make us, in the inimitable words of Newt

Gingrich, the enemy of normal Americans, and it would always work.

And it didn't work. I think one of the problems that their party had was they developed a sense of entitlement to the White House. They railed against entitlements, but they thought they had an entitlement to govern, and I think it caused them a lot of trouble. You've got to give Gingrich some credit. They don't want to anymore, but the truth is that he figured out that if they came back in '94, before people felt better about what we did with the economy or what we did with crime or whether they saw any progress on welfare, with a specific plan that could both mobilize their right and hold their establishment, Republicans, they could make some gains. And they did.

And what we did in '96 and '98 is, we came back with better plans and better ideas. But a great debate was joined in America about the future of the country, and we were winning it. So I think that—but they got back in the game, and they stayed in the game, even though what we did in '98 was truly historic, what the Democrats did—and I give Gephardt and Daschle a lot of credit for it—and what our people do, because we had a program, and we ran on it. And we said, "We're interested in what we can do for you, not what we can do for ourselves."

So I think part of it was they—secondly, what were their options? If they knew the American people agreed with my political philosophy more than theirs, if they knew the American people agreed with the specifics I was advocating more than theirs, then what was left? Personal attack, discredit, delegitimize. And they never stopped, not from '91 through the '92 campaign. Then they just started the day after I took my hand off the Bible taking the oath of office; they kept on going. And it was not totally unsuccessful. That is, they succeeded in hurting me but not helping themselves.

So now they're in a different place now. They're trying to change their image and their rhetoric. But to be fair, too, I think that there are—a lot of the whole movement of the Republican Party, even beginning with President Nixon and the Silent Majority campaign, to what President Reagan said, right up to the present day, was based on a certain

critique of the sixties, and what the Democrats were. You know, our notion of inclusiveness was, to them, accepting things that—even now, the leadership, we can't get them to embrace the hate crimes bill because it includes gays—and the whole idea of opposing the Vietnam war and all that.

And I think they thought—I think a lot of them genuinely felt that I represented a lot of things in the culture that they didn't like. I don't think it was all politics. I think a lot of them didn't like that.

### ***President's Perspective on the Press and Politics***

**Mr. Harris.** A different question, but maybe a little bit related one. Have you figured out—I mean, I think it's fair to say you had a certain amount of scratchiness in your press relations over the 8 years. Is that your view of it?

**The President.** Yes.

**Deputy Press Secretary Jake Siewert.** Last question. [Laughter]

**Mr. Harris.** And I've got a theory about why that is, but —

**The President.** What is your theory?

**Mr. Harris.** I think—if you leave White-water aside, because I know you have very specific grievances about that, we've talked about—that modern political journalism makes its business sort of first and foremost to go to what are motives behind what somebody says. What's the real agenda? If this is, sort of, their reality, what's the, maybe not the contradictory reality but at least, sort of, the alternate reality? And I think that kind of reporting felt like whenever your motives are questioned or not taken at face value bugs you a lot. That is my theory.

**The President.** It used to bug me a lot. It doesn't bug me so much anymore. One reason is that I found that that's different from who I am. That is, I don't make a big habit of questioning the motives of people who are on the other side of arguments from me. And I have learned enough from my own mistakes in life and also from misjudging other people to know that an analysis based solely on what other people's motives are—you need to try to understand them.



But in the end, what matters in public life is what is done and does it advance the American people's—does it advance the ideals of our country, the values of our country, the interest of our people? And so, I think it's a rather hazardous thing to do.

Also, I did feel that, in a certain way, I got a little more of that than most, maybe because I was the first person of my generation to win the Presidency, and maybe because I was, in the stirring phrase of my predecessor, just the Governor of a small southern State, not really known to a lot of people, and also the fact that I had basically carried this New Democrat DLC banner. And there was, I think, a lot of suspicion to that, because there was a certain paradigm, I think, for reporters about, "Here's what the Republicans are. Here's what the Democrats are. Here's what the Republican issues are. Here's what the Democrat issues are."

And I think when you challenge that paradigm, it was easy to say, "Well, that's just a political stratagem. It's a motive for getting elected. It's not serious." But out there in the country, I don't think those paradigms ever worked very well.

I was talking to Dirk Kempthorne today, who's a Republican I admire a lot and like very much and a man I worked with on a couple of fairly important pieces of legislation when he was a Senator. And he said he really liked being Governor, and I told him he would. He asked me one time if I thought he should run for Governor. I told him I thought he would like it very well because he is a guy who thinks, and you know, we're really different on a lot of issues. If I were running against him, it would be an honor. I admire him. I like him. We could have an honest difference. And then we could make a lot of agreements and do a lot of things. That's the politics that I grew up with.

And to be fair, I also grew up with a lot of the other, of the race issue in the South; there was always a lot of politics and personal destruction around that. So I wasn't unfamiliar with the kind of things I had been exposed to.

But I think, to me, motive analysis at least has to be undertaken with a certain amount of humility.

## Arkansas

**Mr. Harris.** That reminds me of a question I've got. What is your view of Arkansas? Are you going to go home there, at least part of the time? Skip Rutherford showed me the site where the library is going to be. I hadn't been there in a while, that whole new shopping center there.

**The President.** It's great. That's an important part of my life, that whole area, because it's very close to the old State House, where I declared for President and had my two election nights, a building that I basically restored to its historic—that was one of my projects as Governor, to take it back to the way it was between right when it was opened in 1836, the year of our statehood.

**Mr. Harris.** When you look at Arkansas, it's a place with all this sort of sentimental attractions for you. And a lot of your friends are still there. I would think, on the one hand, it's a very positive association. And it's also the place where it seems like somebody is always crawling out from under some rock. You've got this disbarment thing, Jim said, "If I were him, if they do that, I'd pull the damn library out of there and put it in Georgetown."

**The President.** A lot of my friends in Arkansas think that. But see, I don't have a—look, I always had adversaries in Arkansas. And when Dale Bumpers and David Pryor and I retire, they got the upper hand, because a lot of the people that we thought were coming along behind us, like David Matthews, whom you know, decided for personal reasons not to run for Governor, not to run for Senator. If David Matthews had run when Senator Hutchinson did, he'd be Senator today.

And Arkansas, I believe, was hurt by the fact that the Arkansas Gazette couldn't go on. It was one of the great progressive newspapers in America for decades. And it got in this newspaper war, and the man that won is a hardcore conservative Republican with a longstanding opposition to me. They basically intimidated all the good people off that committee. Blair probably told you what happened.

But you know, that's all true. But I think it's a great mistake to analyze a situation only in terms of the adverse factors. I mean, look

at this—this State, they elected me Governor five times; they stuck with me through thick and thin; they voted for me twice, even after the Democratic Party had lost a lot of its leverage there, and the main newspaper was in a tirade daily against us. They hung in there.

And if it weren't for them, I wouldn't be sitting here talking to you today. You know, our crowd will come back because—and we have come back. We've got this very progressive—my Congressman, Vic Snyder, is a great, progressive Congressman. He's one of the few people in Congress—he's a lawyer and a doctor, a very interesting fellow. Marion Berry, who worked in the White House for me, is our other Democratic Congressman from there. I think we've got an excellent chance to win a third seat down there. You know, you can't let the politics get—but all these rocks that turn out, you've got to understand the kind of people that they've turned up. I made enemies in my years in politics, and there are people who are disappointed. What they learned was, they got a certain set of signals here. People will assume it's true, unless you can disprove it. And you'll be rewarded for that sort of stuff.

So I think that, with all of that, the great majority of the people there just hung in there.

### 2000 Election

**Mr. Harris.** One last question. I often get the sense at these fundraisers that you are—you hear it when you're talking at these fundraisers. It's almost like, well, you wish you could make the argument or grab the Vice President or other Democrats by the lapels. "No, say it this way. This is the way to frame the argument. This is the way to frame the question." How often are you sort of befuddled by the inability of other Democrats to articulate the case the way you feel it should be articulated?

**The President.** Well, first of all, I think that in '96 and '98 we pretty well sang out of the same hymnal, and we did a very good job. As I said, I think you have to give Gephardt and Daschle enormous credit, and their colleagues, for what happened in '98. Only a few people understand the truly his-

toric significance of that election. I mean, we could have lost six Senate seats and didn't lose any. And it was the first time since 1822 that a President's party had won seats in the sixth year of a Presidency, in the House.

And what I think has happened this year is, you know, we had a primary, a Presidential primary; then other things happened. And I think that one of the reasons I'm really excited about the Lieberman selection is, I think what you'll see now is a clear commitment to build on the future. We'll be able to distill it in the congressional races around three or four issues. And then I think the Vice President and Lieberman will do a great job at the convention.

I don't think that's quite fair that I'm frustrated there. I think my job is to try, in these fundraisers—the reason I talk the way I do at these fundraisers is that all these people who come to our fundraisers know a lot of other people who don't come to them and who aren't as political or maybe even moderate Republicans or whatever. And what I try to do, that I think I'm in a unique position to do because I'm not running, is to analyze the choice before the American people today in terms of what's happened and what's going to happen.

The frustration you pick up in my voice is not what the others are not doing, it's what I think is the only risk for us in this election—which I, by the way, if you've been talking to our people, you know I've always believed that Al Gore will be elected. I still do. I have always believed it. I never stopped believing it when he was 18 or 20 points behind a year ago. I always believe it. I think he's easy to underestimate because he's a very serious man who doesn't think only about politics all the time.

But if you look at that sort of bouncy, bouncy Gallup poll that's in the USA Today, today—you know, 19 down, 2 down—it shows you that the people are looking for a little meat here. They want to know what the real deal is. That's the most encouraging thing I've seen, because the thing that I've been frustrated about is when times are really good and people feel good—and nobody wants to bring them down, least of all me—everybody has got other things going on in their lives. So the temptation, first of all, is

to think, well, things are rocking along here, and this is not the biggest election I've ever had to face here, because things are going so well; and then to feel, well, because of the strategy adopted by Governor Bush and by the whole group, well, there's maybe not that much difference anyway, which reinforces that it may not be important, and it clouds everything up.

What I want to do is to have people stay up but understand that what you do with all this prosperity is as big a decision as what we had to in '92 and maybe more difficult because you have to create something. You have to imagine: What is it you want America to look like in 10 years? You actually have the ability to do it now. It's not like you've just got to turn the ship of state around. What do you want to do? And then, what are the choices?

So I think that I'm in a unique position to sort of talk to the American people about it like that, and that's what I do at these fund-raisers. I try to say, this is what I honestly believe the choices are. I don't want the Democrats to be in a position of personally attacking the Republicans. I don't want us to get in the position that the other guys have been in for so much the last 8 years. I don't think we should say bad things about them. I think we should posit that they're patriots, that they love their country; they love their families, and they can do what they think is right.

But we shouldn't be fuzzyheaded here that there aren't profound differences that won't have profound consequences for how we live and how we go into the future. And I believe that, after we have our chance at the convention and then we'll have the debates unfold, I think that we'll have some clarity of choice, and then we'll see what happens.

When young people come to me and say they want to run for office, what should they do, I always give them two pieces of advice. Number one, you've got to have a reason that's bigger than yourself for wanting this job, and you've got to be able to tell people what it is in fairly short order. And number two, you have to adopt a strategy in the campaign with the following goal: On election day, everybody who votes against you will know exactly what they're doing. Because if

everybody who votes against you knows what they're doing, then you don't have any gripe if you lose. Now, if everybody that votes against us this time, votes against the Vice President and Joe Lieberman, knows what they're doing, we'll have a majority of the vote.

### **Atonement**

**Mr. Harris.** Can I ask a one-sentence answer, or will I be in the doghouse? One sentence?

**The President.** What?

**Mr. Harris.** Do you think a strong year, finishing up 2000 in a sprint, can that cleanse the mistakes of 1998 to some degree?

**The President.** No.

**Mr. Harris.** No? And you don't view it that way?

**The President.** No. For one thing, I think that the only thing that can cleanse a mistake, ever, is an apology and an atonement. And I think that my—to the extent that the promise I made to the American people to work like crazy for them every day I was President is a part of that, I think that the answer to your question may be yes.

But the reason I said no is, I think the American people accept that—you know, they know what happened. Well, they think they know what happened. They know that I did something I shouldn't have done, and I apologized for it. But I have tried to atone for it both in a deeply personal way with my family and my coworkers and friends but also in a larger sense by serving the American people. And I think they have long since been a framework of putting it behind and of looking to the future and seeing whether what I'm doing makes sense for them and their families and their future. That's why I said no.

But it is, for me—I have felt a renewed sense of rededication to the business that I have been elected to perform because they stuck with me, and it's something I'll never forget and always be grateful for.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 7:30 p.m. on August 8 aboard Air Force One and was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 14. In his remarks, the President referred to political pollster Mark Penn; media consultant David

Axelrod; Mort Zuckerman, publisher and chairman, and Michael Kramer, reporter, New York Daily News; Terance McAuliffe, chair, Democratic National Convention Committee 2000; David Leopoulous, longtime friend of the President; Gov. Dirk Kempthorne of Idaho; J.L. (Skip) Rutherford, member of the board of trustees of the Clinton Presidential Library; former Senators Dale Bumpers and David Pryor; former Gov. Michael Dukakis of Massachusetts; former Speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich; former Arkansas State Representative David Matthews; and Republican Presidential candidate Gov. George W. Bush. The President also referred to DLC, the Democratic Leadership Council. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

**Memorandum on Japanese Research Whaling**  
September 13, 2000

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Interior, the Secretary of Commerce, the United States Trade Representative*

*Subject:* Japanese Research Whaling

On September 13, 2000, I received Secretary Mineta's certification of Japan under the Pelly Amendment, 22 U.S.C. 1978, for having authorized its nationals to engage in whaling operations that diminish the effectiveness of the International Whaling Commission. The Secretary has also certified Japan under the Packwood-Magnuson Amendment, 16 U.S.C. 1821(e)(2).

I direct the Secretary of State to inform Japan that the United States will not, under present circumstances, negotiate a new Governing International Fisheries Agreement (GIFA) with Japan, which has been certified under the Packwood-Magnuson Amendment. A GIFA is a prerequisite to foreign fishing inside the U.S. exclusive economic zone (EEZ) (16 U.S.C. 1821(c)). Without a GIFA, Japan will not be eligible for the allocation of any amounts of Atlantic herring, Atlantic mackerel, or any other species that may become available for harvest by foreign vessels in the U.S. EEZ, during the period in which the certification is in effect.

I also direct the Secretaries of State, the Treasury, Commerce, and the Interior, and

the United States Trade Representative, (1) to identify options for ensuring that existing prohibitions against the importation of whale products under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*, and the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*, are fully enforced; (2) to investigate the disposition of products from the Japanese research program, to ensure that no whale derivatives enter into international commerce in contravention on obligations under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; (3) to summarize the size and nature of economic activity in Japan related to whaling; and, (4) to continue to consider additional options, including trade measures, as warranted by developments in Japan.

I further direct the Secretary of Commerce, in coordination with all relevant agencies, to keep me apprised of developments as needed, and to report back to me on these issues prior to the end of the 60-day period triggered by his certification.

**William J. Clinton**

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 14.

**Remarks at a Breakfast With Religious Leaders**  
September 14, 2000

Good morning, everyone. I'm delighted to welcome you to the White House. This is the eighth, and final—[*laughter*—]for me, White House Prayer Breakfast that we have at this time every year.

I want to thank Secretary Glickman for joining us. He's sort of a symbol of our broad-based and ecumenical approach in this administration. He's the first Jewish Secretary of Agriculture. [*Laughter*] And he's helping people to understand that Jewish farmer is not an oxymoron, so that's good. [*Laughter*]

I want to say I bring you greetings on behalf of Hillary, who called me early this morning to ask what I was going to say—[*laughter*—]and the Vice President and Mrs. Gore. As you know, the three of them are otherwise occupied, but they need your prayers, maybe even more than I do. [*Laughter*]